DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 348 643 CS 010 988

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TITLE Using Environmental Print Media To Enhance Third Grade Children's Reading and Writing Abilities.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 57p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Grade 3; *Language Enrichment; Parent Participation; Primary Education; *Reading Ability; *Reading Improvement; *Writing Ability
IDENTIFIERS *Collaborative Learning; Emergent Literacy; *Print Media

ABSTRACT

A course of study to enhance the effectiveness of the traditional third grade reader and workpack as instructional tools was designed for this practicum. The goal was to create a familiarity with the purpose and function of varied print media available within the community, thereby creating a foundation upon which the students (30 third graders) could base their understanding of the settings, themes, and experiences of the traditional third grade reader. The program utilized varied print media and speakers from the students' school and community environment. Classroom cooperative learning centers were established, and a number of group activities and individual assignments were required. Family involvement was encouraged through the broad scope of interactive homework assignments. The program resulted in a heightened sense of achievement, enthusiasm and confidence. The children developed the means of visualizing the printed word. A connection of verbal interaction was developed between school and home. A collaborative setting generated the process of bringing meaning to the printed word. This group practice allowed students to transfer their verbal visualization strategies to the stories of the traditional third grade reader. The children demonstrated meaningful gains in their abilities to describe the purposes and functions of varied print media. (One table of data is included and 43 references are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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Using Environmental Print Media to Enhance Third Grade Children's Reading and Writing Abilities

by

Rhoda Orenstein

Cluster XXXIX

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: William Alban, Principal
William S. Alban, Principal

Long Beach, California
Address

March 25, 1992
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Rhoda Orenstein under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

June 28, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

Wm. W. Anderson
William W. Anderson, Ph.D., Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer gratefully acknowledges the following people for their contributions to the success of this practicum:

William S. Alban, Principal
William W. Anderson, Advisor
Terri Bolding, Team Teacher
The targeted third grade children and their parents.
The writer's family

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ABSTRACT

Using Varied Print Media to Enhance Third Grade Children's Reading and Writing Abilities. Orenstein, Rhoda D., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Early Literacy Development/Language Experiences/Functions of Print/Whole Language/Literacy Strategies/Literacy Behaviors/Collaborative and Cooperative Learning/Thematic Role Play.

A course of study was designed by the writer to enhance the effectiveness of the traditional third grade reader and workpack as instructional tools. The goal was to create, in the targeted third grade students, a familiarity with the purpose and function of varied print media available within the community, thereby creating a foundation upon which the students could base their understanding of the settings, themes, and experiences of the traditional third grade reader.

The writer created a program that utilized varied print media and speakers from within the students' school and community environment. Classroom cooperative learning centers were established. A number of group activities and individual assignments were required. Family involvement was encouraged through the broad scope of interactive homework assignments.

The program has resulted in a target population with a heightened sense of achievement, enthusiasm and confidence. The children developed the means of visualizing the printed word. A connection of verbal interaction was developed between school and home. A collaborative setting generated the process of bringing meaning to the printed word. This group practice allowed students to transfer their verbal visualization strategies to the stories of the traditional third grade reader. The children demonstrated meaningful gains in their abilities to describe purposes and functions of varied print media.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The geographic setting of the Kindergarten to grade 5 elementary school is a community of approximately 400,000 inhabitants. More than 75,000 youths and adults are enrolled in the district's 82 schools. This city has witnessed a serious decline in manufacturing and industrial employment, while at the same time experiencing a sharp increase in an unskilled immigrant population. City and state resources have struggled to provide affordable housing, adequate health care and quality education for the city's residents.

The socio-economic setting of the K-5 elementary school is a multi-racial, suburban neighborhood in transition, moving from stable, owner occupied single family homes to new rental apartment complexes, often housing multiple or extended families together in small one or two bedroom apartments. Half of the school population comes from the surrounding neighborhood, while the other half is bused from overcrowded schools in the central city area of the school district.

The families of the students are primarily poor, unskilled workers of limited English proficiency, who have recently emigrated to the United States from Asian and Hispanic countries, as well as from India and Iran. A total of 883 students attend this school; 393 qualify as Chapter 1 participants. The federally

funded program addressed in this paper began in September, 1990. The budget allows for employment of a full time facilitator, hired for management of the Chapter 1 funds, along with support staff, such as a nurse, counselor, speech specialist, learning disabled specialist, a community liaison school worker, and a transportation worker, all of whom are part-time employees at this school site.

The target population consists of 30 third grade children. Seventeen of the target population to be served have limited English proficiency. Five of these children are attending school for the first time. Seven children attended an English as a Second Language Center for part of the school year. Five of the children are identified as learning disabled. Based upon the writer's observation and evaluation discussed below, the children are inexperienced socially in a school setting and have limited exposure in their homes to literacy materials, (e.g., phone books, magazines, menus, letters, calendars, shopping lists, community bulletins, and newspapers) which the writer and others refer to generally as "print media" or "environmental print" (Mason 1980).

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer is a participating member of the school staff and Parent and Teacher Association; both as an instructor/leader and speaker/moderator. The assignment for this year is Teacher, Grade 3, in a self-contained classroom. Responsibilities involve planning and implementing the fourteen subjects of the state and district curriculum of Educational Programs, Grade 3.

The writer is a state credentialed teacher for grades K-12 and community colleges, and is a district mentor teacher trained in the district programs Essential Elements of Instruction, Classroom Management and Curriculum Development. As a district mentor teacher, the writer develops specific

strategies in such areas as motivation, lesson planning, and behavior management to assist new and experienced teachers with implementation of the state and district mandated curricula.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

In 1990, the state mandated educational goals in writing and reading for grades K-6 which qualify for Chapter 1 program funds. As a result, every classroom teacher was expected to adhere to this reading and writing curricula in the given allotted time to meet the educational expectations of the state and the district. The classroom teacher was required to have on file individual reading/writing records for each child in the classroom. The district consultant, school facilitator, and principal are required to monitor the reading and writing curricula to insure equal access to equal instruction for all children. Teachers followed required reading and writing schedules and activities that had been developed by the book publishers and district consultants to satisfy the state mandated reading and writing curricula and its testing guidelines. Curriculum guides and workshops were developed to provide methods of presentation and evaluation of the state reading and writing curricula. The basal reader and its work pack, which consisted of word study skills and language mechanics, skill sheets and tests, were specifically developed for such purposes.

The developers of the basal reader and work pack of word study had assumed that by the time most children had reached the third grade they had

become familiar with varied print media in their environment and with the purpose and function of print media as it related to family needs and events. The basal reader and work pack contained descriptive vocabulary and references to places, objects, and events that most third graders could, presumably, relate to prior experiences through social interaction with adult caregivers, family, or participation in community events. The children had seen and read food labels, bus, truck, street, and store signs. They identified and understood restroom signs. Household lists and bills had been observed, messages and letters had been written and exchanged, community event bulletins, newspapers and advertisements were shared.

It was also assumed that such children had been guided in learning adventures and experiences by caregiving adults in a socially interactive, stimulating environment, one that was conducive to developing the literacy skills necessary to apply the verbal and written language lessons of the third grade curricula. By the time they entered the third grade, such children would have helped their mother and father write a letter, gathered ingredients to bake cookies, shopped for supplies to wash laundry, purchased groceries, and checked out books from a public library. They had been asked about their day at school, what they had learned, what their teacher said, and who won the game. They fought for the funnies and the sports pages from the newspaper, cutting out and sorting the coupons for their favorite cereal. Such children located community events, parks and shopping malls, and they set the table after a scout meeting or a game of checkers or cards played with their siblings.

Such assumptions were not unreasonable if one believed that the life and experience of the school children in the target population mirrored the lives and experiences of the children of a decade ago.

Our country's economy and changing population have created a new school population with different backgrounds, both culturally and economically. A norm of two working parents or a single working parent, English as a second language, lack of reading comprehension or ability of parents or family, lack of exposure to "traditional" homes activities like meal time conversation or magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and a lack of familiarity with use of government or quasi-government services or organizations, such as police, community activities, gas or water departments creates a new student population with markedly different needs. In many instances, those children who don't speak English enjoy restricted activities within a restricted community, limited by language or lack of familiarity with the services and structure of their new community. School provides their first exposure to a new world.

These sweeping changes challenge educators to address a student population that has the intellect and desire, but lacks the traditional experience and resources to absorb the mandated curricula through traditional materials and methods of instruction.

The basal reader and work pack, designed for general use and application, assume the student's ability to relate, transfer and absorb the designated reading and writing curricula. Unfortunately, no curriculum guides or workshops have been developed for, and directed at, a student population which has limited experience with the language and limited exposure to the literacy activities assumed by current learning materials.

The target population was observed to be familiar with common, accessible print such as billboards, signs, occupant mail, TV guides and TV advertisements, bus schedules, prescriptions, letters, etc. However, they were not familiar with the purpose and functions of print and were unable to bridge

the gap between observation of existence and understanding of function. They saw these things as objects, rather than tools.

They seemed unaware that the everyday events could be translated into print, such as selecting a meal from the menu at a fast food restaurant, using a laundromat, purchasing stamps at a post office. These children lacked exposure to the meaningful functional uses of print experiences which connect home, community and school literacy activities.

Based upon the writer's observations, the problem was summarized as follows:

1. The state mandated educational goal of reading comprehension and writing competency for all children had to be met through utilization of the recently developed basal reader, theme tests and work pack materials adopted in 1990 for grades K-6 by the school district. Such materials assumed an environment in which children could apply many learning strategies to integrate, absorb, and apply the lessons of the basal reader and work pack in the time allowed for such studies by the state and the school district.

2. The target third grade population's limited reading and writing experience, and lack of exposure to, and familiarity with, commonly used types and functions of print media limited the effectiveness of the basal reader and work pack as instructional tools.

Problem Documentation

For a period of two weeks in the Spring of 1991, the writer observed the 30 children in the target population involved in the daily reading and writing activities. The activities were selected from the basal reader and work pack. The objective of the activities was to elicit verbal and written responses to the content and concepts of the stories, and to reinforce language mechanics and word study skills. Such activities revealed that the children had difficulty relating to the story's content. For a period of four weeks in the Spring of 1991, individual children were interviewed for 15 minutes on Thursday afternoons, which is designated as teacher planning time, while the other children were on the play yard.

The writer administered both the Functions of Print Test (Weiss & Hagen, 1988) and the Environmental and Functional Print Test (McGee & Lomax, 1988) to all 30 children in the target group. Showing the child actual print items, the writer and a team classroom teacher conducted interviews informally within the classroom setting, recording the responses verbatim. The two test formats were followed exactly as described by the authors, with the addition of five items and two questions designed to elicit information regarding exposure to print media at home, and to discover the existence of student interest in taking any print media exhibited in the classroom home to share with adult caregivers, siblings or peers.

The results of the data indicated that 6 of 30 children were familiar with all of the displayed categories of print media. Twenty-four of 30 were familiar with 13 of 15 categories of print media.

Responses to the question, "why do people read the item?" indicated difficulties in understanding the varied purposes of reading or the relationship of

reading to what was written. Twenty-two of 30 children perceived the reading process as limited to the reading of the basal reader at formal instruction time. As an example, one child's response to a magazine was that "people don't read it, they just look at it."

The result of the children's responses to the question on the kinds of print media in the home that were similar to those exhibited in the classroom revealed that 7 of 30 homes share two telephones with the absence of a telephone book. A rationale given by one child was that "the book took up too much space." Eleven of 30 homes had newspapers in Cambodian, Korean or English. One of the 30 children indicated that "no mail in envelopes comes to his house." Twenty-nine of 30 children answered in the affirmative to the question of their interest in selecting print media to take home to share from the 15 displayed categories in the classroom.

The results of the writer's informal interview with parents during the Spring, 1991 Public Schools Week showed that 16 of the 21 families represented were interested but unaware of how to utilize print media for learning, and that any newspapers or magazines were shared with adults in other families, but were not shared with children. Children were not involved in everyday activities such as making up grocery lists, paying bills or writing letters, because it took time to involve the child. Children and family used the telephone as an instrument for conversation, but did not use it to locate information, nor did they use a telephone directory.

Causative Analysis

Through observation, interviews and a review of student work, the writer identified several reasons why the target population was unable to derive the necessary literacy skills solely from the basal reader and work pack.

Limited time and opportunity was available at home or at school for the children to incorporate or apply the rich vocabulary of the basal reader and work pack to the everyday events of their lives. In order to grasp the meaning of language, vocabulary needed to be utilized by the children to describe an object, relate an event, or make up a story. The children required a forum to display or experiment with such skills and all too often, time for such activities was a luxury in the children's home.

As a result of limited formal schooling or frequent geographic relocations, children's social interaction experience between themselves and their peers was too limited to effectively communicate their understandings and needs, let alone to share knowledge gleaned from the reading and writing curricula.

Although referred to as a work pack, children could not actually write in the work pack. The transfer of skill testing from the reader work pack to traditional worksheets was time consuming, taking the bulk of the children's efforts to correctly transfer results. The work pack was not treated like a student's personal record of achievement, thus diminishing the sense of pride that a completed personal item would have brought it to students with few items to call their own.

The school site followed a compulsory homework policy utilizing the work pack materials. Worksheets were sent home, but students often lacked someone at home to review the assignment. Instruction of the caregiver was not an integral part of the process. Without a change in instructional methods to include caregiver training, the materials may be changed to fit the target population but the targeted results were difficult to achieve.

As an example, some children had never been to a post office to mail a letter. Without such background or experience, a post office related story in the basal reader seemed foreign and incomprehensible. The act of mailing a letter

had little meaning to these children when the purpose of writing a letter had never been understood. In many homes, letter writing or use of the mail system was nonexistent, or such activities did not include the children.

In the classroom, a child observed little purpose in the use of writing, other than to complete the work pack worksheets. In addition, there was limited opportunity in the classroom for the development of the skills of story-telling or conversation. Little time was set aside to encourage a dialogue between students and teacher about homework, classroom activities, or topics of general interest to the students.

It was observed that many children lack proficiency in their native language, as well as in English. Without proficiency in their own language, they were unable to transfer the English vocabulary contained in the work into a more easily absorbable application in their native tongue.

Finally, although the district recognized the need for literacy materials in the home, it had yet to provide training and materials for teachers, parents or children which utilized print media available within the community as a useful supplemental tool for literacy instruction.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Many noted authors had addressed the observed problem of children having difficulty understanding the varied types and functions of print media in their lives. These authors observed and identified the types of environments necessary for and/or conducive to the development of a child's literacy skills, and they identified specific circumstances under which the development of such skills could be impaired. Many also noted the positive impact that utilization of environmental print media had on the development of literacy skills.

By researching their work, this writer identified and distilled those things which were lacking in the target population's environment, and attempted to develop a supplemental curriculum which addressed and remedied the limited experiences so as to put the target population on a level with the student for whom the basal reader and work pack was developed.

The various disciplines and topics researched in the areas of literacy development were writing and reading processes, whole language, psychology, sociology, technology, cognitive strategies, psycholinguistics, learning disabilities, and language disorders.

Teale (1982), Taylor (1982), and Tough (1974) described how various forms of communication became meaningful for a child when interacting in a social environment. Social interaction began with the family in an informal, natural setting, one which could continue when the child attends school. A child observed the purpose of written and verbal language in its home through interaction with family members in family activities. The observed function provided a natural motivation for the use of language in the social setting. The authors referred to above believed that the process of literacy was neither "teaching" nor "learning" alone. It was a mutually constructive process which required social interaction to be effective. Teale, Taylor and Tough proposed that a child built knowledge and achieved literacy through interaction and observation of verbal and written language being employed for a specific purpose.

The authors suggested that certain literacy activities and experiences of a child in the home and community could be further developed in the school. Both Teale (1982) and Taylor (1982) related environmental and functional uses of print media to school activities where the student could use these activities to solve practical problems and maintain social relationships. For example,

children could read newspapers, create greeting cards, write lists, leave messages, and keep records. Another form of literacy activity that Tough (1974) suggested was that children communicate orally about their past and present experiences in an informal, social environment to develop meaning from the content of the talk. For example, children could talk about feelings, abilities and behavior of themselves and others as well as attributes of objects and places.

The consensus of the authors was that the enhancement of literacy required a basis of relevance by emphasizing the oral and written language of home and community with activities in the classroom. Tough (1974) stated that the child must be given time to express himself orally by talking and discussing to clarify ideas with others. Thus, the child developed the critical areas of thinking that allowed him to function in a meaningful way. Predicting, imagining, and explaining were examples of self-expression within the home, community, and school. However, Teale (1982) and Taylor (1982) stress that written language could be developed in school from personal experiences in the home, community, and school. The authors emphasized that materials, whether they were printed for the child or written by the child, had to be purposeful to the child to make the literacy transference between home, community, and school.

All authors observed children in their natural, informal environments. The authors' primary purposes were to record the children's literacy behaviors as they interacted socially with family, friends, peers, and teachers. Taylor (1982) and Tough (1974) came to the same conclusion as Teale (1982) about the importance of environment in helping children express their needs through the use of verbal and written language. The authors recommended that the children participate in home and school activities where speaking, reading, and writing were involved as a social process.

Halliday (1975) and Tough (1976) observed that a child's environment contributes the language and experience upon which the child develops. Halliday noted the relationship between the function of language abilities of a child and the functional categories of language, describing language as a form of cultural interaction and social development for the young child. Tough (1976) and Halliday (1975) suggested that the child, surrounded by language, required social interaction to extend the meaning of language to higher levels, or to change the meaning of language through interpretations the child derived from active participation with other people and events. Halliday believed that it was this interaction involving people and events that actually created meaning. Absent this interaction, a child's language activities tended to center on parts or structure of language, rather than meaning of the language as it relates to their life.

Halliday (1975) and Bruner (1985) both suggested that the child would reach out to the environment in an attempt to gain support for their needs and would develop uses of language through caregiver guidance. Early language literacy experiences were accomplished in a natural learning environment, referred to as "scaffolding" by Bruner. It was a means to ascertain a meaning based on rituals that formed a dialogue between a child and the members of the family, primarily the mother. The adult builds on the child's expressed language and helps the child extend his meaning and develop new concepts based upon the foundation of the old.

The writings of Wells (1986) gave additional support to Halliday (1975) and Bruner's (1975) findings. Wells wrote that speaking, reading, and writing, the tools of literacy, were developed out of social needs, and that much of a child's language developed and used in the home differs from what they're exposed to and use in school. Children recognized the meaning of language

when it served their own needs, needs which differ in different environments. Therefore, such interactive experience was a necessary foundation for the expansion of such skills in the classroom. Children who lacked an interactive language environment outside the classroom found it difficult to deal with the requirement of interaction at school.

Stahl (1989) and Carpenter and Just (1986) stated that children must be helped and encouraged to make connections of speech and print at early literacy development stages, and children needed a varied background of experiences with oral language to discover meaning of unfamiliar print language. The child who could read but had difficulty comprehending text was referred to as "concept-unaware" because he/she could read the words, but as a result of little prior knowledge, he/she did not know how to apply the knowledge conveyed by the print to increase comprehension.

Macon, Bewell and Vogt (1989), and Goodman Y. and Goodman K. (1983) explored the function of family and caregivers in the development of knowledge by initiating activities with children which developed an awareness of meaning in speech and print communication. Bonfadelli's (1986) interviews with families suggested that families lacked interactive communication activities with print media, thereby limiting children's question and response vocabulary.

As Weaver (1988) noted, even as children were surrounded with print media, they lacked encouragement to see it as something with meaning, understanding, and purpose. The function of print media, and its use in the development of literacy skills must be demonstrated. For example, if when paying a telephone bill, the caregiver showed the child that his/her call to a friend or relative lasted five minutes and cost $2.53, then the bill had relevance, and the function of print had been effectively demonstrated.

Temple (1988) demonstrated a link between sound and sound as represented in print. Temple believed that children explored sound and representations of sound in print media as evidence of the earliest beginnings of language. An extension of this link had been shown by Dyson (1982) who reported that children's drawings were actually forms of writing used to imitate the language which surrounded them. The key to both developments was an interactive experience of encouragement and connection provided by adult caregivers, older siblings, or peer interaction.

Temple (1988) noted that adults provided the language and language experiences from which children construct their own ideas of language and its application to print. The print form of speech may also appear as a representation of a particularly long portion of story in a familiar alphabet of the child's own design. .

Demonstrating one benefit of an interactive environment, children who were read to by a caregiver, sibling or peer, learned a written form of language as opposed to a verbal-dependent form of language such as that discussed above. They heard and read simultaneously, thereby perceiving that language could be used to explain or describe things which were not necessarily the subject of everyday activities.

Dyson (1982) suggested that children's drawings were writings which she called visible language; that the drawings were the language elements of print needed by the child to record or recall events or conversations. Children talk about their drawings in the same manner as that of the adult caregivers who read to the child as a means to involve them in reading written stories or information.

Hall (1987) cautioned that traditional reading and writing activities in the classroom might inadvertently limit children from building upon their existing

literacy foundation. A child's informal, playground peer interaction were more useful than classroom exercises in that such interaction often fostered the connection between speech and print. One child would teach another the rules of a playground game, baseball cards were compared and traded, a comic book or magazine was shared. Such interactive experience was more real and understandable to a child than any of the information being presented in the classroom and actually assisted the child in absorbing the lessons of the reading and writing curricula by conveying the functions of the print.

Hall also noted that families were often unaware of the impact that patterns of interaction had on children. Family patterns of speech interaction could stress giving directions and commands to children, rather than engaging them in reflective, responsive conversation. If a child was only familiar with speech as a common, directive device, then the child would require more interactive skill training in the classroom.

Boegehold (1984) raised the issue of cultural distinctions and the potential conflict between instructional methods in the classroom and the "proper" behavior of children in certain cultures. Some cultures did not include children in conversations and a child's questions or responses could be considered rude or disrespectful. Adults gave directives and special kinds of information related to the care of the child. The child was told by members of the family that the task of learning to read and write was the responsibility of the school. As a result, the home environment provided no conversation or other interactive experience utilizing or demonstrating the functional uses of print media, relying instead on the school environment to foster such skills.

It was these cultural differences, said Boegehold (1984), that produced a different level of social interaction in the classroom. Thus, a culture pattern

could inadvertently inhibit or limit a child's abilities to engage in the social interaction of inquiry or problem-solving strategies.

Mason (1980) called the print forms that surround the child outside the classroom environmental print. Such things as grocery items, restroom doors, and fast-food menus gave meaning to the function of print media. Mason felt that environmental print provided a useful method of establishing meaning in the communicative function of print, especially if the existence of such environmental print was assumed to play a role in the child's world outside the classroom. For many children, environmental print was their primary exposure to the function of print. However, it should not be assumed that all children were exposed to such print media in an interactive manner. Mere observation did not establish and reinforce function.

Anderson (1985) found that understanding and enjoying print media is a learned behavior dependent upon adult caregivers demonstrating the behavior as a necessary and useful function. Children required exposure to adults engaging in conversation with one another, and playing games with and without written rules which required dialogue which establish rules, winners, and losers. Children had to be involved with adults as their role models.

Halliday (1975), noted that a child used language to get something or to get someone to do something. Through use of the language for such functional purposes and the interactive experience that results from such use, the function of language had meaning for a child and the child could then control its life and understand how it could be controlled by others. Halliday conceived of children acting as their own agents, creating meaning within their lives through interaction with family, friends, and peers.

Unfortunately, Anderson (1985) found that many adult caregivers lacked literacy experiences to provide a model for children to emulate. The adult

caregiver could not take advantage of the emerging literacy opportunities when their child began to draw or "write" a list or a story, because they lacked the experience that would build upon the first functional aspects of the act.

Heibert (1981) and Teale (1986) pointed out that children in school were expected to learn to read and discuss the elements of a story before they had experienced what a story was. Simple family events had not been related to the child in the guise or style of a story, nor had such a narrative format been encouraged in relating other activities within the sphere of the children. The children had not been involved in family, friends, and community happenings, nor had they been allowed or asked to tell or to retell an event. Compounding this inadequacy, the children had not been given time in the classroom or on the playground to share events in a narrative format.

Heibert noted that such children were at risk academically for additional reasons. Children who were not made aware of the world of print and books also often lacked exposure to reading and talking. Contributing to this situation were parents with marginal literacy skills, and a home environment with limited reading and writing materials. The parents could not serve as models of literacy for the children, and, often times, their homes were too crowded with people, the home lacked good lighting, and the family income was limited to expenditures for basic necessities.

The literature reviewed above focused on the importance of environment in the development of language literacy skills. By "environment," this writer referred to caregiver/child interaction, the presence of print media in the home, use of print media and language in the home, establishment of dialogue, and conversation with adult/caregivers as a part of culture and peer interactive play. This exploration of the roots of the problem gave direction to the writer and other authors towards development of a solution strategy.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goal and Expectation

The following goal and expected outcomes were projected for this practicum. The goal of the writer was to provide the target third grade children with sufficient time and resources to develop literacy skills by experiencing the nature and purpose of varied forms of print media. Such experience would effectively supplement the current reading/writing curricula, as represented by the district selected basal reader and work pack.

The methods of evaluation and exercises that follow enabled the writer to plan and implement an effective supplemental curriculum and measure the progress of the target population.

Behavioral Objectives

By the end of the implementation period, at least 24 of 30 children in the target group will have collected eight forms of current print media from the communities in which they live and will have read and shared these materials with other children.

By the end of the implementation period, at least 24 of 30 children in the target group will have created a minimum of four writing projects that reflect their

experiences with varied print media and will have read, shared, recorded, and filed these projects in their individual writing-reading portfolio.

By the end of the implementation period, all children in the target group will have read at the cooperative learning centers for a minimum of 40 minutes each day. At least 24 of 30 of these children will have reported to a learning center group and, on their reading list filed in their individual writing-reading portfolio recorded that they have read a minimum of eight forms of varied print media.

By the end of the implementation period, at least 24 of 30 children in the target group will have written to a minimum of three different people for three different purposes, recorded on a writing survey in their individual writing-reading portfolio.

By the end of the implementation period, at least 24 of 30 of the children in the target group will have selected a minimum of 8 of 15 current forms of print media from the classroom library to share at school and at home as recorded on the checklist of classroom work and homework.

Measurement of Objectives

The extent to which these objectives were attained were determined from class records, journals, checklists, and portfolios of children's work maintained by the writer.

The writer maintained and logged the children's portfolios of projects which included (a) homework checklists, (b) dialogue journals, (c) samples of written work, (d) reports of projects. During the interview phase of the documentation period, children expressed a desire to take certain print media home to share with caregivers, siblings, and peers. Each child was given their respective portfolios to take home with them for a given time. The children were

encouraged, through suggested exercises, to augment the collection of print media and add to their portfolio of projects documentation of their interactions with family, neighbors and friends.

The writer and child evaluated and recorded their discussions of print media projects in the reading/writing portfolio. The portfolio was made available for parent/teacher conferences.

The reading/writing portfolios were evaluated by the school's education consultant, principal, and the writer to ascertain the number of students who met the objectives set forth in the practicum. Because all of the children had met the objectives, the writer considered that the practicum had increased the third graders' abilities to apply, absorb, and integrate the content of the reading/writing curricula through the use of print media.

At the end of the twelve week implementation period, the writer retested the target population with the previously administered Functions of Print Test (Weiss and Hagen, 1988) and the Environmental and Functional Print Test (McGee and Lomax, 1988) with the expectation that if 24 of 30 children in the target population described the functions of the 15 categories of print media used at the print media centers, then the writer would consider the print media centers positive tools in preparing the children to apply, absorb, and integrate the nature and uses of varied print media.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The third grade children observed by the writer, had difficulty understanding and relating the nature and function of varied print media to their lives. Several authors had developed and implemented solution strategies which, through the incorporation of language and the development and utilization of print media, addressed the literacy skill requirements of the target population.

The solution strategies were informally categorized as peer interactive task related and environment generated and related. Many relyed, to some extent, on the incorporation of print media from a child's environment into the children's lives. In all instances, the effectiveness of a solution strategy was dependent upon the writer's ability to determine the cause of a problem and to determine and implement a specific course of action for each individual child.

Vygotsky (1978), Taylor (1983), and Brophy (1979) agreed that a teacher developed the learning environment at school and had the primary responsibility of modeling the desired literacy behavior of students.

These authors, while acknowledging the impact of the home environment on a child's skill development, recognized the positive impact that a teacher had

if he/she could demonstrate how the home environment could make a contribution.

Elrod (1979) and Perera (1990) recommended that the teachers observe the learning strategies used by children, and use those strategies as the basis for the lesson design. Duplication of the natural learning strategy allowed for absorption and application of new concepts through familiar channels.

Tough (1976) and Halliday (1975) supported the idea that the purpose of school activities in any subject was to encourage children to verbalize with each other and, in the process of such verbalization, gain meaning and understanding of the function of language for themselves.

Peer interactive learning is the recommended approach of Slavin (1985), Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1986) who advocated a style of instruction known as "cooperative learning," which puts students together in interdependent working groups, providing positive interaction and positive peer collaboration, along with subject matter instruction.

Resinbrink (1987) and Janda (1990) had observed the benefits of peer interaction among students with varied language abilities. When encouraged, peers taught one another, utilizing collaborative strategies to allow each student to contribute according to his/her abilities. As a result, students with lesser language abilities attained higher achievement, while students with greater language abilities attained positive reinforcement through instruction of others.

The use of thematic play as an interactive tool was suggested in the literature of Segal and Adcock (1981) and related studies by Piaget (1968) and Simelansky (1989). In their description of children's imaginative and dramatic play, it was observed that through play the children added new information to increase their literacy foundation.

Morrow (1990) stated that children could see and find purposes of reading and writing in an active learning center where there were literacy related materials and a chance for them to use their imagination and dramatic play to express themselves to the teacher and to one another. Such peer interactive activities gave the child exposure to an environment of shared information, an environment that may be missing from the child's home. In addition, the peer interactive learning environment provided the child with a forum in which to relate family experiences to the reading and writing curriculum.

According to Holdaway (1979), children, when surrounded by high print environments, needed opportunities to develop their understanding of print through appropriate tasks that met the needs of individual children. Such tasks consisted of writing letters or notes to a friend, using a school calendar to plan an activities schedule, or developing a class newsletter.

The findings of Harste, Woodward, et al (1984), Mason (1980), and Taylor (1983) supported the idea that when guided, children could develop an awareness of the purposes and places to use functional and environmental print in their daily lives. Guidance could be from a teacher, rather than a caregiver. However, the most effective venue for the task related activity was the home, where the activity had relevance to a child's existence.

Taylor (1983) stressed that guidance by teachers achieved results when teachers encouraged literacy behavior by connecting reading and writing exercises to family experiences. Even if the child was not aware of, nor an active participant in family literacy activities, the teacher could elicit information about such activities from the child by asking questions about a letter written at home, the author, the subject matter of the letter, the person to whom it was

written, and how it was sent, thus relating the activity in the home to the classroom activity.

Routman (1989) suggested that a child's environment be filled with a variety of forms of print. If both the school and home environments were filled with newspapers, letters, junk mail, story books, school mail and the like, a child was free to explore independently with teacher, caregiver, sibling or peer, the purposes, reasons or functions of the print. Van Kleeck (1990) agreed, stressing the necessity that a literacy learning environment involve children in the print-related events that happen in the home, and that the reading materials surrounding the children be related to their lives and experiences.

Description of Selected Solutions

The prior survey of existing literature provided the writer with a variety of ideas from which to develop a learning strategy for the targeted third grade population. However, one must realistically acknowledge the constraints imposed by the current fiscal circumstances of the school district. Limited time was available to diagnose the specific needs and developmental limits of each of the targeted students. Limitations on space, staffing, and other resources, such as money for additional materials, inhibited the provision of supplemental lessons and activities.

The writer had observed that the target third grade population, lacking traditional literacy experience and adult guidance, reflected a marked lack of confidence. The children struggled to recognize the meaning of words in context. They had limited understanding of the content, settings, themes, and problems of traditional third grade readers. As a result, their enthusiasm for learning was reduced to confusion and apprehension.

The writer implemented developmentally appropriate practices and techniques to correct perceived background deficiencies of the target population. Rather than relying solely on the strategies suggested by the reading and writing curricula, the writer created a learning environment that provided access to the lessons of the basal reader through imitation and initiation of caregiver/peer interaction and exposure to life activity through utilization of commonly available public and private print media.

The selected strategies had been chosen by the writer because they fostered enthusiasm and encouraged interactive learning opportunities. In addition, they attacked the causes of the target population's literacy problem by making use of environmental print media for task related activities which were both school and home related, resulting in a broad based understanding of the function of print.

The writer was sensitive to the cultural and socioeconomic conflicts, discussed in Chapter II, which resulted from the introduction of certain instruction strategies in the classroom. Where caregiver interaction would ordinarily be an essential element of an instruction strategy, the writer relyed on a strategy that encouraged caregiver interaction, but allowed for substitution of another individual in the event that such interaction was unavailable. Otherwise, an unnecessary burden was placed upon the child, because in the target population, a caregiver was defined as a parent, grandparent, uncle, aunt, older sibling or neighbor. In this case, devising a flexible strategy merely recognized the reality of today's home environments.

The writer used existing successful teaching methodologies by supplementing the basal reader with print media related to the children's communities, such as literature supplied by children's museums, posters or other examples of expressive arts, university and community college programs,

library resources, children's book reviews, park and recreation programs, hospital wellness programs, neighborhood newspapers, and children's editions of local newspapers.

The writer arranged neighborhood walks to community sites such as city hall, the library, a museum, or a city park. City officials, or their representatives, spoke to the students and introduced them to the accessible print media developed and distributed by their respective agencies. The attempt was to relate the reading-writing curricula to the children's real world.

The following selected solution strategies will be attempted:

1. Children were encouraged to write and respond to other third grade team members at the school site for many purposes such as to compliment and/or to complain.

2. Children were encouraged to share writing and reading projects at school in the form of a "Print on Display Day."

3. All third graders at the school site were involved in a day of wearing readable clothing. The group developed an exhibit of such clothing.

4. The children developed alternative forms of assessment and evaluation with portfolios of projects including (a) check lists, (b) dialogue journals, (c) samples of written work, and (d) reports of project events.

5. The writer made and modeled a large size class dialogue journal to encourage children to write responses to each other.

6. Children were provided with opportunities to write and respond to teachers and each other in group journals, recording the dates.

7. Children took home from the classroom lend and learn library print media, such as magazines, neighborhood newspapers, community bulletins about events at parks and centers, programs from the visual and performing arts

and health and fitness brochures. The children recorded how the print item was shared.

8. Children made and took home books of print materials, consisting of paper sacks from stores, restaurants and fast food outlets, assembled in a table of content form to be shared during K-1 reader-to-reader events.

9. Disposable cameras were provided to groups of children who took photos and wrote commentaries and captions.

10. Children were instructed in the use of materials to play the role of:

- a newspaper person doing interviews or reporting current events.
- the editor of a sports magazine or the National Geographic.
- a photograph caption writer.
- a newspaper reporter for a cooking column.
- an expressive arts program writer.
- a poster artist.

11. The children developed:

- game rules and park rules.
- safety slogans for the neighborhood and the school.
- "Wellness and Feeling Fine" exercise and health programs.

As described above, the supplemental materials included varied categories of print media that demonstrated useful information and real tasks, as well as new and familiar events from many of the children's communities. The physical setup of the classroom and the management of the print media centers allowed for more collaborative interaction among groups of children while they develop purposeful writing projects together. The role play demonstrated comprehension by requiring the children to orally present the ideas expressed in the print media. A connection between oral presentation

and print media was reinforced through scheduled visits of speakers from the corporate and community sources of the print media.

An important factor leading to the success of the program was that the school principal and district consultants supported a program which complemented and enhanced the mandated curriculum, encouraged school/family involvement and benefited the family through the child's increased ability to interpret and apply information from community sourced print media to help meet family needs.

The writer prepared a twelve week outline utilizing print media which supplemented the basal reader with free materials consisting of varied print media available from a variety of sources. As part of the outline preparation, the writer developed a list of corporate and community sources of print media that were easily adaptable for use in developing reading/writing skills and which recognized the limited exposure and diverse culture of involved classroom population.

The writer, working with the site principal and school district officials, solicited corporate and community sourced print media, and ordered such materials in sufficient quantities for full class participation in all activities throughout the twelve week period. The writer met with the site principal and district language arts consultant to present an outline and reviewed print media prior to classroom use.

Utilizing the list of the solicited corporate and community sourced print media, the writer organized a speaker's bureau and community activity schedules.

For the purpose of documenting progress, immediately prior to implementation of the solutions, and at the conclusion of the twelve week

program, the writer administered an informal Houghton Mifflin reading assessment test (1989) to the target population.

Report of Action Taken

Certain aspects of the implementation plan require a more detailed description to fully understand the writer's methodology.

Activities were specifically designed to increase a child's reading and writing experiences and to improve a child's ability to understand the function and varied types of print media found in a literate society. Such activities were varied and adjusted to address the level of interest or enthusiasm exhibited by each child in the target population.

The classroom setting was modified to accommodate the implementation plan in the following ways. The writer arranged a "language-rich" classroom with many forms of print media gathered from the children's communities. A large classroom area, papered with posters, was arranged for the "Lend and Learn" library into fifteen categories of varied print media. Stories were one category selected to relate the content of the story to the content of the print media. Three spacious classroom learning areas were arranged for ten children to work together with a working schedule for on-site and off-site resource people. The writer then met with the practicum observer to discuss the practicum organization, management, evaluation tools and the time estimated for each day's session integrating varied print media and language arts. Implementation dates were cleared with the observer and times were set for practicum updates, beginning with implementation and continuing to the conclusion and dissemination of the report and its findings.

Parental Involvement

The parents/family of the target population were given a schedule of the twelve week program at the parent/child/teacher first report conference, and reviewed the program with the writer.

The intent of the program was explained to the parents and their role as participants at home was emphasized and illustrated by the writer through use of examples. The degree of parent and family commitment to active participation in weekly homework assignments was modeled to the parents through the use of homework checklists and examples of a portfolio of varied print media selected from the "Lend and Learn" library.

Print media uses and their importance to reading and writing skills, child/teacher expectations, structured lessons and activities, progress logs, charts and schedules kept by the writer, sign-in work sheets, students' portfolios, group dialogue journals and the classroom dialogue journal were demonstrated for the parents and the child's benefit. In addition, the parents and family were invited to the scheduled on-site and off-site guest speaker visits. The target population was given a district approved Houghton Mifflin Reading Assessment (1989) pretest and an informal district approved Writing Interest Survey (Quinn 1989) one week prior to the first week of implementation.

Week One

During the first week, the objectives and evaluation tools of the program were explained and modeled and discussed by the writer with the children in each of the classroom learning areas. These tools included the group journal, homework checklist, sign-in sheet, library checkout bar graph, portfolio samples and their print items.

The schedule of on-site people and their print and off-site visits were read, explained and discussed with children who were then advised of their responsibilities and expected activities as receivers of print media. Social skills and job/work skills to be used were explained, modeled, discussed and practiced with each other in groups of ten, including the social skills charts at each print media learning center.

The children were then acquainted with the "Lend and Learn" library loan system, fifteen categories of print media and their homework assignments. They were told of their assignment to collect other print media to add to the library. Large paper (store name) bags held class sets of print media to be shared at home and classroom centers as well as to be used for projects.

The state reading and writing curricula was studied for content by the writer who then attempted to match the content of the stories to the content of varied print media available in the children's communities. The writer designed and developed student interactive activities utilizing the varied print media (at the centers) that complement and supplement the reading and writing curricula and match the stated objectives of this practicum. The writer developed a group dialogue journal for each learning center group and a large size classroom journal for the evaluation session held each day. The students cooperatively selected a journal writer each day.

Learning Center Activities

The children helped each other create a portfolio from the large paper bags and other print media that they collected. The accumulated portfolios held homework and activity assignments during this program, the contents of which were shared by the children in the following way. First, the children described their portfolio to the group, showing it while they told where and how they

gathered their print items, and who helped them along the way. The children in each group then selected two members from the ten in the group to record the group activities and the group's recounting of such activities in a group journal. The children read each other's portfolios, commented and complimented each other on the contents, and together created a classroom word list of the words they found familiar.

The writer laminated each child's portfolio to create in each child both a sense of accomplishment and an appreciation of the lasting impression that a written compilation of work has on others. The portfolios were used at school and taken home to be shared with parents, family and friends.

Weeks Two Through Four

The writer prepared such activities at the learning centers to support the on-site resource people in their discussions and demonstrations during weeks two through four.

The intent of weeks two through four was to guide students through structured lessons at print media centers. On-site resource people, including the school nurse, playground coach, school bus driver, school community worker, cafeteria manager, school music teacher, school secretary and the school custodian contributed additional print media to the centers. At these centers, students categorized the media by content to determine the purpose and the reader for whom the media was written. The on-site personnel lead discussions, explaining how they used their print media in their work.

The school custodian read his job description book and showed the children pictures and procedures and asked their help in making posters to keep graffiti from the school site. The school custodian, a retired post office worker from New York, offered to visit again to show his stamp collection and

first day covers and to read a favorite story about the stamps. The children's written reactions to this event included writing individual thank you letters and an invitation to the custodian.

Each day, a resource person and their print media lesson was followed by stories read from the basal reader and core literature. The writer selected the story, resource person and print media to correspond with the content of the lesson as a way of connecting school, home and community experiences. The children read print materials supplied, in many instances, by the on-site resource person. Time was given for questions, discussion and general interaction between the children and the on-site resource person. The children then re-read the print media, which included the literature, with each other.

Weeks Five Through Eight

Prior to weeks five through eight, letters were written by the children to parents and family to request permission to walk to the nearby children's art museum, main county library, city offices, main post office, city park, community center, restaurant, city and neighborhood printer for the newspapers and newspaper offices and a large mall.

At the off-site locations, representatives explained the way that they used print materials in their work. The children took notes during these visits, which were later shared with others. They asked questions of the representatives in an interview format in order to introduce them to a new form of interactionary communication.

Following the off-site visit, the children shared their notes, taking new print media back to the learning center to evaluate with their group. They selected members from their group to write about the event, including their comments and reactions in the group journal. The group journal became part of

a "Lend and Learn" library at the end of the twelve week implementation. The children wrote thank you letters to each off-site resource representative and requested that the representative come visit their print media learning center at school.

The city libraries had a Winnie The Pooh Week; the librarian asked the children to read advertisements that had the same theme. The children wrote letters to the librarian they met to invite him to read more Winnie The Pooh stories.

They invited a new restaurant owner who talked to them about menus and asked them to write a letter to him that began, "If I owned a restaurant, this is what I would serve." The restaurant owner asked to be a partner with this nearby school.

The newspaper "cooking" writer was invited back by several children for an exchange of favorite recipes. Four of the children's family recipes were included in the newspaper.

Thematic role play followed each off-site visit. The three learning centers were supplied with print materials, changed according to the information resulting from the representative off-site speakers and their print media. The children shared the new print materials. They created many of the props needed for the thematic role play. These became projects to be shown at a writer's fair held one week prior to the conclusion of this practicum. This occurred during the first week of the second parent/teacher/child report conference.

Weeks Nine Through Twelve

During this period, the children continued to create and develop projects. The children made board games and other games used at the city park

recreation centers. They wrote directions on sets of cards. They made paper bag books of print materials collected from the community.

During weeks nine through twelve, stories were read by a newspaper reporter, a printer, a restaurant owner, as well as other on-site and off-site personnel. They made pamphlets, programs, posters and newspapers for a Print on Display writer's fair and a school wide Wearable, Readable Clothes Day.

Each child had developed enough knowledge to create their own letters, and wrote them in response to their own needs and to respond to the story tellers. These story themes were not directly related to the print media used on the jobs but were related to the themes of sharing, friendship, nature and change. The shared reading and retelling of stories enabled the children to talk about content and to connect reading and writing.

The program lasted twelve weeks. During the last fifteen minutes of each print media session, all of the children met at the "Lend and Learn" library area to review and evaluate the lesson. The writer showed how to be a group writer for a group dialogue journal. The teacher wrote the day's events in a large classroom journal and responded to the children's observations. All the children read the journal entry together. They also read the classroom graph of print media available from the "Lend and Learn" library. Print items to be shared at home were returned or exchanged at this time. The library list was checked weekly to make sure that children checked out at least one item each week to share at home.

The portfolio homework checklist was monitored weekly. Teacher-written award letters were sent home with the portfolio for parent, family and child. A weekly log was kept during the informal conference time held with each child in

the program to evaluate their progress. A daily observation log was kept by the teacher of children's reactions to the activities in the program.

The culmination of the twelve week practicum activities included three post tests. The Function of Print Tests (Weiss & Hagen, 1989) and The Environmental and Functional Print Test (McGee & Lomax, 1988) were given to show an increase in the student's understanding of the purpose of fifteen categories of varied print media. Houghton Mifflin Reading Assessment Test (1989) and the Writing Interest Survey (Quinn, 1989), were administered to all thirty children in the program to indicate an increase in reading comprehension. The results were compiled and evaluated for the final report.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This practicum was designed to provide the targeted third grade children with sufficient time and resources to develop literacy skills by experiencing the nature and purposes of varied forms of print media. Evidence was presented by the children to confirm that the objectives were met.

The first objective called for 24 of 30 children to collect eight current forms of print media from the communities in which they live. Both the number of children participating in the collection efforts and the amount of print media collected, exceeded the writer's objective.

The intent was to give children a way to successfully complete assignments while developing their abilities to relate familiar events from the collected print media to the events of stories that were read in school.

Informal observations were recorded by the writer and team teacher in a classroom log. Five children collected print items the first week. The positive reaction at show and share group time motivated others to begin this assignment. Twelve additional students were involved in collecting and sharing the second week. During the third week each student had created a portfolio made from large paper grocery bags which further facilitated the process of home to school collecting, showing and sharing.

By the end of the fourth week the assignment of collecting print media was being met by 26 of 30 of the children as verified by the children's names recorded on the bar graph at the Lend and Learn classroom library. By the end

of the twelfth week, 30 of 30 of the children met the objective. The children eagerly rushed to the learning center to show their classmates their collected item and tell the group writer where the print media was collected and to describe the print media and tell who assisted them with its collection. The event and the reactions were recorded in each group's dialogue journal. Then children read what was written. The children documented their own collection of print media in their portfolio of writing and reading projects list.

The second objective called for 24 of 30 children to create a minimum of four writing projects that reflect their experiences with varied print media.

The intent was to have children gain experience with the use and purposes of varied print media shared by people in the school and communities. All of the children created a portfolio of print forms as one purposeful project. The writer and team teacher observed that thematic role play was the actual vehicle for developing projects. The on site and off site resource speakers were used as models for such role play.

The observer recorded nine children enthusiastically involved in creating props as needed to assist in their role play. This enthusiasm increased as eleven other children asked to become workers, players and helpers in the role play initiating and imitating new roles. By the seventh week of the practicum, 30 of 30 of the children had a list of four or more completed projects documented in their portfolio.

Subsequent to the completion of the above projects, many children asked to take writing supplies and print materials home. They replicated projects with their family, parents and neighbors. They documented this sharing of their portfolio with their classmates in the group's Dialogue Journal.

The school and home projects were displayed at the school Print on Display Day. The children wrote a description of the project and its purpose

and referenced the people involved in its creation. Thus, the second objective of the practicum was exceeded, since all of the children contributed to the creation of the writing projects.

The third desired objective was for 30 of 30 children to read at the Print Media cooperative learning centers for a minimum of 40 minutes each day, reading at least eight forms of varied print media by the end of the twelve week practicum. The intent was to have children experience the reading of literature as one form of print media valued in a literate community with content related to that found in varied print media. The writer and team teacher observed the children recording their reading selections on the sign in form. They listed name, date and category of print media at the print media cooperative learning center. All 30 children read for a minimum of 40 minutes on the days of attendance at school. The children documented their reading selections on their own Reading List in their portfolios.

The fourth desired objective was for at least 24 of 30 of the target group projected to show the varied purposes of letter writing, such as demonstrating the appropriate form to use under given circumstances.

All of the children met this objective by the end of the twelve week practicum. All of the children voiced their satisfaction in being able to communicate their needs by writing letters to different people for varied purposes. They expressed this in individual conferences with the writer and the team teacher. The children's responses were recorded in their reading/writing portfolio.

To measure the gains made in writing for varied purposes, the Writing Interest Survey (Quinn, 1989) was administered orally and individually to the 30 children at the end of the program.

The fifth desired objective was 24 of 30 children using the classroom Lend-and-Learn library as a research source to find at least 8 current categories of print media to share at school and at home. At the tenth week of the practicum, 30 of 30 of the children demonstrated that they had learned how to select and share materials from the Lend-and-Learn library which illustrate fifteen varied categories of current print media by recording their names on the library loan out graph, thus exceeding the desired participation objective.

All children's abilities to show and share the purpose of varied print media was recorded in each group's Dialogue Journal. These documents were reviewed by the writer, team teacher, observer and area reading consultant. All children shared at least eight current forms of varied print media with parents, family and neighbors. They talked about the categories of print, describing it and telling the purpose for which the print was originated. This was documented by the sentence check marks and signature on the district developed Homework Checklist. Parents also verified their talks, with their child telling personal experiences with varied print media at the second report parent/teacher conferences.

The Function of Print Test (Weiss & Hagen, 1989) and the Environmental and Function of Print Test (McGee & Lomax, 1988) were readministered at the conclusion of the program. The test results demonstrated an appreciable gain in the children's abilities to describe the purposes and functions of fifteen categories of print media.

The objectives of this practicum were met. As noted, objectives were often exceeded. An unanticipated, yet extremely desirable result of the program was the high degree of parent involvement in the program.

The results of this practicum were illustrated in the following table comparing expectations of standards of achievement and the actual results.

TABLE

Comparison of Standards of Achievements With Actual Results

Standards of Achievement	Expected	Actual Results	Met Outcomes
Collect from their communities and share varied print media	24 of 30	30 of 30	Yes
Create writing projects that reflect experiences with varied print media	24 of 30	30 of 30	Yes
Read and report each day about varied print media	24 of 30	30 of 30	Yes
Write for different purposes to different people	24 of 30	30 of 30	Yes
Select varied print media from the classroom library to share at school and at home	24 of 30	30 of 30	Yes

Conclusion

During the all-too-brief twelve week period of this practicum, this writer witnessed significant growth and development of the target population's reading and writing skills, the substance of which has been chronicled in the foregoing chapters. The interest, enthusiasm, camaraderie, interactive development, sense of accomplishment and self worth that this experience has engendered in the target population and their families was outstanding.

A unique aspect of this program is the lack of a need for the instructor to develop a specific, prescribed student reading list, instead relying on development of a student and community-contributed print media portfolio to serve as the focal point of the program. Using varied print media from the communities in which they live gave the children a way to make the connection between reading and writing and the varied needs that reading and writing address, both for themselves and for their families.

In this brief time of experimentation, opportunities for print media learning activities increase exponentially as students become familiar with the function of reading and writing in the home and at school. Within a few weeks of their exposure to this new form of learning, the children enthusiastically sought new material from home which they contributed to the group portfolio. No poster, advertisement, political pamphlet, magazine or newspaper escaped the children's attention.

One of the benefits of building familiarity through use of the children's environment was that the children had a desire and reasons to read their selections over and over again. They were self motivated to read and share the

print media, repeating this learning strategy many times with friends and family at home, on the bus and at school.

Rather than competition, the school group interaction created a cooperative environment where the children, as a group, were motivated to assist the groups members to overcome unfamiliar vocabulary and to overcome general unfamiliarity of some children with objects unrelated to some of their experiences. Parents have reported that this collaborative way of sharing ideas and learning was then employed by the children in the home environment.

Using available resources for reading and writing gave the parents an opportunity to make a reasonable contribution to their child's understanding of and exposure to the purpose and use of reading and writing. Parents sent their children to school with church bulletins, cultural announcements, and family celebration invitations. They found a successful, meaningful way to talk about the purpose of school work and homework with their children, and the children found a new way to contribute to their home, through making lists, recording family events, and, in many instances, showing the way toward integrating their family's lives into the society at large. The parents should receive credit for the affirmative role that they took in this exercise, and their pride, enthusiasm and efforts must be encouraged. The newly found confidence and skills displayed by the children have been and will be the parent's greatest reward.

Recommendations

This program works because it addresses the individual educational needs of students within the context of their daily lives. Thus, the educational benefits of such a program may be employed at all grade levels for all ages. Additionally, if the program is utilized by different grade levels within the same

school site, it may provide a forum for inter-multi-grade interaction and learning benefits.

By virtue of its reliance on existing print media materials readily available in the community, and utilization of existing classroom facilities, the program effectively addresses educational needs in an era of fiscal and educational limits. This writer believes that educators would do well to evaluate the adoption of such a program, because it addresses the infinite possibilities of education and achievement in a time of finite resources.

Dissemination

The writer held two open classroom visits for the teachers and children from two Kindergarten to first grade, one second and four third grade classes. The children worked together with the target population in the three print media cooperative centers. The writer plans to continue this type of school based in-service to introduce the ideas projected in this practicum during the school year.

The writer will distribute copies of this practicum to the area and district media centers with plans for area and district in-service sessions, and will assist with additional in-service training where necessary or beneficial to the school teaching and administrative staff.

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